

Guide for Employee Relations Staff

- You receive a call or letter from a manager saying that an allegation or complaint has been made about a member of staff. At this point it is important to ascertain if the subject of the complaint is a 'vulnerable adult' in terms of the Safeguarding Adults/Adult Protection policy and guidance.
- If they do fit these criteria, remind the manager that they have a responsibility to consider using the Safeguarding Adults/Adult Protection process. They can seek advice from other colleagues or from the Safeguarding Adults/Adult Protection Team if unsure.
 - The next step is to consider if the staff member needs to be sent home. There are occasional situations where people can be moved to non client contact settings, but sending them home usually protects them as well as the vulnerable adult.
 - The safeguarding adults process should have been initiated by the manager and must fit in with your timescales i.e. a strategy meeting within 5 working days from the staff member being sent home.
 - The strategy meeting should include police where relevant, care manager, CQC (Care Quality Commission), ER (Employee Relations), any other key players with a contribution to make (see Safeguarding Adults Guidance for more detail). It should be chaired by a Safeguarding Adults Officer or by another manager.
 - The Safeguarding Strategy meeting will look at the whole picture, including the possibility of any other vulnerable adults being at risk; the need for a police investigation; the need for more information etc. The meeting will decide what type of investigation, if any, needs to take place. Police investigations take precedence over all others. Work needs to be done with the police to enable joint interviews with HR where possible, to avoid interviewing vulnerable adults twice.
 - Where there is no police interview and the issue is dealt with under the disciplinary process, there are two things that may assist your staff. One is to enlist the support of a trained investigator, and two for ER advisors to get a place on the Safeguarding Adults Investigator's training.

The main reasons for using the Safeguarding Adults/Adult Protection process are:

1. To ensure the needs of the vulnerable adult are given high priority
2. To ensure that the broader picture is looked at i.e. is anyone else at risk, or may they have been?
3. To ensure that police involvement is considered from the beginning and the contamination of evidence is minimised. If evidence has been contaminated, the case will have difficulty getting to court.
4. It can run in conjunction with the disciplinary process but requires close liaison between the different agencies, particularly where the police are investigating an alleged crime.
5. To consider the future of the staff member, if guilty, in terms of protecting vulnerable adults e.g. POVA list application.